

Rain, rain,
go away;
Let the sun
shine bright
today!



Donald T. DiFrancesco
Acting Governor

Jane M. Kenny
Commissioner

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Community Matters

A Newsletter for the Employees of the Department of Community Affairs

VIEWPOINT

Housing Scholars

by Commissioner Jane M. Kenny

The First Union/DCA Housing Scholars Program has come a long way since the Department of Community Affairs started this initiative in 1989. Our first class matched students from one school, NJIT, with one non-profit agency, New Community Corporation, to help build affordable housing. Since then, this program has grown, both in numbers and in scope. And it gets better every year.

The reason the program is successful is because of the participating agencies, the scholars, the education community, our co-sponsor, First Union Bank, and the committed staff at DCA, **Janis Ginsburg, Meyer Pincelli** and Housing and Community Resources Director **Keith Jones**.

First Union recently increased its award to \$60,000, allowing us to increase the scholars' wages. This has enabled the schools to recruit their finest students.

The program has grown because it makes sense.

Students get an opportunity to gain valuable experience working to help people. Non-profits get enthusiastic, talented people to help them fulfill their missions. And people in need get the benefit of their combined efforts.

We've helped the program grow in many beneficial ways.

We added a new feature last year that proved to be very popular – a one-week, on-site training program that serves as a living laboratory,

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Tops Assembly resolution honors Commissioner Kenny for record tenure at DCA.

It's a Record Kenny Longest-Serving Commissioner; Assembly, Governor Praise DCA Tenure

After five years, Jane M. Kenny has served longer than any DCA commissioner, and the state Assembly and the Governor's Office marked the occasion by praising the department for its accomplishments during her tenure.

The Assembly approved a resolution sponsored by Assemblymen John Kelly and Michael Arnone that commends the commissioner and the department.

"Under the capable and effective leadership of Commissioner Jane M. Kenny, the Department of Community Affairs has provided invaluable service to the people of New Jersey, receiving national recognition for its outstanding work in promoting urban revitalization," the Assembly resolution states, noting the commissioner's "depth of knowledge and breadth of experience have contributed immeasurably to the successful functioning" of DCA.

A proclamation from the office of Acting Gov. Donald T. DiFrancesco cites DCA's successful programs "to protect health, safety and welfare through code enforcement and the development and preservation of housing, and its efforts in support of community groups and women's organizations."

Kenny has served as DCA commissioner since May 1996. During her tenure, DCA has instituted new urban redevelopment programs, encouraged sensible state planning, broadened many neighborhood revitalization initiatives, promoted the sharing of local services to benefit taxpayers, and helped finance a record number of affordable housing units. Both the department and the commissioner have won a number of national awards for those efforts.

Division on Women Official To Head Affirmative Action

Deirdre Webster Cobb, currently the deputy director of the Division on Women, has been selected as DCA's next Affirmative Action Officer. She will replace **Lorraine Aldridge**, who is retiring effective September 1.

Deirdre, an attorney specializing in labor and employment law, said she is looking forward to her new assignment.

"I'm really excited about it," said Deirdre. "It's right up my alley. I've done a lot of work with discrimination and affirmative action matters."

Deirdre has been with the Division on Women for three years, but said she missed the "hands on legal work. I was interested in doing something with more of a legal orientation."

Deirdre was nominated by a three-person management committee and approved by Commissioner Kenny.

Before coming to DCA's Division on Women, Deirdre served as the regulatory officer for the state Department of Labor for five years. In that role, the

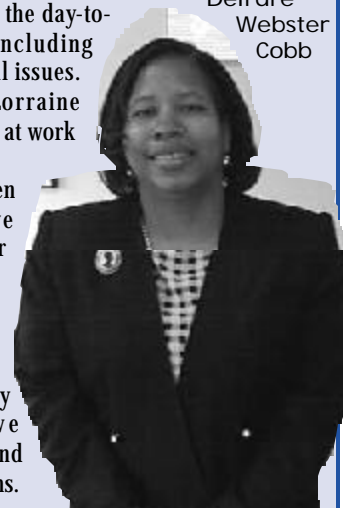
Burlington resident and native of Pittsburgh provided legal counsel to the Commissioner of Labor.

With the Division on Women, Deirdre helped run the day-to-day operations, including personnel and fiscal issues.

Deirdre and Lorraine Aldridge are already at work on the transition.

Lorraine has been DCA's Affirmative Action Officer for the past eight years. She regularly took the lead in organizing events that celebrated diversity and affirmative action with fun and educational programs.

Deirdre
Webster
Cobb



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REAP and REDI In Award Semis

The REDI and REAP initiative, DCA's shared services incentive program, has been chosen as one of 10 regional semifinalists for the 2001 Innovations Awards Program sponsored by the Council of State Governments.

REDI, the Regional Efficiency Development Incentive Program, and REAP, the Regional Efficiency Aid Program, are providing financial incentives for local governments to share services and save taxpayer money. The Division of Local Government Services administers the initiatives.

The Eastern Regional Innovations Selection Committee of the Council of State Governments will select two award-winning programs and one alternate at the Eastern Regional Conference Annual Meeting in Bartlett, New Hampshire in late August.

Conference Honors Achievements

A Caldwell monsignor, who is a founding "father" of the Association of Blind Athletes, New Jersey (ABANJ), won a special award at a conference co-sponsored by DCA's Office of Recreation.

The Evelyn Aronow Dolan Citizen's Award was presented to Msgr. Emmanuel M. Capozzelli, who, at age 81, is still highly involved with the association and its team of athletes and coaches.

The award was among those presented at the 22nd Annual Governor's Conference on Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities at the Princeton Marriott. In addition to the Office of Recreation, the conference is sponsored by the New Jersey Commission on Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities, the New Jersey Recreation and Park Association and Chase Manhattan Bank.

"It is a pleasure to recognize these outstanding individuals and groups who help to ensure that all citizens are able to enjoy the benefits of recreation," said DCA Commissioner Jane M. Kenny.

Acting Gov. Announces Smart Growth Grants

Acting Gov. Donald T. DiFrancesco has announced seven more Smart Growth Planning Grants to assist municipalities in New Jersey. The grants total nearly \$300,000.

The municipalities receiving the grants are Byram Township, Clifton, Eagleswood Township, Hammonton, Hightstown, Montclair and North Plainfield.

These grants are in addition to the more than \$1 million for smart growth planning efforts that were announced by the acting Governor in March.

"I want the state to act as a partner when it comes to smart growth planning," said DiFrancesco. "We need to provide incentives to communities that help them grow in ways consistent with the State Plan."

The Smart Growth Planning Grants are administered by DCA in conjunction with the Office of State Planning.

Division Launches Fair Housing Initiative

This spring, DCA's Division of Housing and Community Resources is implementing a statewide fair housing education and outreach campaign entitled "Fair Housing Builds Better Communities."

The campaign is designed to help combat patterns of racial segregation and housing discrimination in New Jersey.

By providing the general public with knowledge of the local, state and federal fair housing laws, individuals will be able to learn about their rights and recognize discrimination.

The fair housing initiative will include a variety of activities, including a major media campaign, the production and distribution of fair housing materials, the establishment of a 1-800 NJ Fair Housing phone hotline, workshops and a complaint referral process.

Transitional Housing For Violence Victims

DCA officials recently celebrated the opening of Dottie's Place, a transitional housing facility in Ocean County designed to help domestic violence victims rebuild their lives.

The eight-apartment complex is dedicated exclusively for long-term housing for victims of domestic violence. The residents will be offered job training, counseling and other services to help ease the transition.

Homes Now, Inc./Sea Shelter, Inc., owns the building and Catholic Charities has been contracted to operate the facility.

DCA provided financial assistance for the initiative through its Shelter Support Program.

"Dottie's House helps to meet the need in Ocean County for transitional housing for women and children leaving the temporary security of a domestic violence shelter," said DCA Commissioner Jane M. Kenny. "During their extended stay at the facility, families will have a solid roof over their heads and a safe, stable and supportive environment around them. They'll have access to services and counseling they need to begin rebuilding their lives and preparing for the future. We want to be sure that decent shelter is not a concern for these families as they work to regain a sense of control over their circumstances."



Dottie's Place Officials gather for the official opening of Dottie's Place, a housing facility for victims of domestic violence.

Speaking Up for Abused Kids

Each year in Mercer County, hundreds of children are brought to court after being abused, neglected or abandoned by their families. It is up to the Juvenile or Family Court judge to determine where these children go next.

Should they remain in foster care? Should they be returned to their families? Or should they be adopted?

To help judges make informed choices in each case, court-appointed volunteers make recommendations based on a child's individual circumstances. These volunteers are part of CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocates.

The president of CASA in Mercer County is **John Catalano** of the Division of Codes and Standards, who won DCA's Volunteerism Award in 2000.

CASA is part of a growing network of community volunteers who speak for abused and neglected children within the court system. The principal mission of the organization is to help ensure that children are placed in suitable, permanent homes.

John helped start the Mercer County chapter of the organization last June.

"The court system is overwhelmed with cases," said John, noting that in New Jersey, an average of 25 children are placed in foster care each day. "The goal of our organization is to represent every child in the system."

CASA volunteers, who number more than 42,000 nationwide, are the eyes and ears of the Juvenile Court. Armed with facts about a child's circumstances, they

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John Catalano

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DCA Cultivates Green Homes

For all the scorn heaped upon those gas-guzzling SUVs, many people tend to overlook that their homes are also massive consumers of energy and significant producers of the "greenhouse gases" associated with global warming.

But as energy prices rise, a movement is growing to make homes more energy-efficient and environmentally sound. Encouraging that movement is the mission of DCA's Green Homes Office, located in the Division of Housing and Community Resources. The Green Homes Office and its coordinator, **Darren Port**, are helping developers incorporate "green building" techniques in the construction of affordable housing while advocating for more environmentally responsible homes across the entire market spectrum.

DCA's Green Homes Office is the outgrowth of a successful pilot program that challenged developers to build energy efficient and environmentally sound homes for people of lower incomes.

Known as the Sustainable Development/Affordable Housing Pilot Program, this initiative is financing the construction of eight "environmentally friendly" developments with 365 units.

The first project to be completed was Westside

Village in Newark. Westside Village involved the adaptive reuse of a former watch factory and new construction to create an elegant and affordable rental housing community that incorporates numerous environmental and energy efficient features.

For example, the wood studs used in the framing are 2" x 6" rather than the standard 2" x 4" to create a deeper wall cavity that allows for more thermal insulation. The cavity itself is filled with blown cellulose insulation rather than the typical fiberglass batts insulation.

In addition, the windows are framed with superior-rated fiberglass, rather than vinyl. Hardwood floors and ceramic tile are used in place of carpeting and vinyl tile. Each apartment has high-efficiency heating and cooling systems that represent state-of-the-art building science. Hallways have an abundance of natural light and hardwood floors to save on utility costs and create a warmth and pleasant atmosphere.

Features like these cost more up front but pay for themselves over time in terms of the savings to residents, the savings to the environment, and the long-term return on the taxpayer investment. The three-bedroom household at Westside Village will

save \$400 a year in energy costs as compared with typical new construction.

The savings to the environment is just as great. Studies suggest that residential buildings are responsible for roughly a quarter of all fossil fuel emissions. By using less energy, housing constructed under the pilot program is 30 percent less polluting than typical new construction.

Based on the program's success, DCA is holding all affordable housing developers to higher standards. All projects receiving funds from the Balanced Housing program must now meet federal EnergyStar standards. The Energy Star designation is earned by homes that use 30 percent less energy for heating, cooling and water heating than homes built to the Model Energy Code published by the Council of American Building Officials (CABO). DCA is also offering a higher subsidy for builders who surpass Energy Star requirements.

Meanwhile, the Green Homes Office is developing several sustainable design workshops, as well as a green resources website.

With DCA leading the way, it seems likely that the green building movement will continue to gain momentum in New Jersey.

Annual Summer Internship Begins

By Marilisa C. Navarro

Who are the young, active students roaming through the DCA offices? Four interns have been selected to work at the state Department of Community Affairs this summer through the Center of Hispanic Policy, Research and Development's, (CHPRD), 10 week paid summer internship program. These students will gain valuable experiences both on the job and through training workshops that will take place every Wednesday.

The Hispanic Interns in Community Service Program, CHPRD's internship program, celebrates its 14th anniversary this year. In 1991, in partnership with Rutgers University's Center for Strategic Urban Community Leadership, CHPRD added the Latino Leaders Fellowship Institute component to the internship program. The Fellowship Institute is an intensive training workshop that exposes students to conflict resolution techniques, good leadership qualities and other skills necessary to succeed in the corporate world. It enables the interns to apply what they have learned at the training sessions to their respective job placements in state government or other areas of public service.

This year's 34 interns were selected based on their overall grade point average, class standing and an interview by the Review Committee. Mr. **Edward J. Alvarez**, Ms. **Wendy Diaz**, Ms. **Marilisa C. Navarro**, and Mr. **Fernando Rodriguez** are the four interns that you have seen here at the DCA. Mr. Alvarez is from Lakewood and will be entering his fourth year at Florida International University in the fall. He is working with the Council on Affordable Housing. Ms. Diaz is from Perth Amboy and will be entering her fourth year at Kean University in the fall. She is working with the Center of Hispanic Policy, Research and Development.

Ms. Navarro is from Philadelphia and will be entering her fourth year at Rutgers University in New Brunswick in the fall. She is working with the Office of Communications and Policy. Mr. Rodriguez is from Ewing and will be entering his third year at Rutgers University in New Brunswick in the fall. He is working with the Commissioner's Office.

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Former Rug Mill Opens as Housing

A former rug mill near downtown Freehold, referred to in Bruce Springsteen's song, "My Hometown," has been converted into a 202-unit affordable apartment complex.

In announcing the opening of the housing units, Acting Gov. Donald T. DiFrancesco said, "This mill once provided steady jobs. Today it resumes its useful life by becoming a great place to call home."

DCA and its affiliated New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency were major financiers of the project, which actually consists of two projects in one building: Rug Mill Families, with 104 affordable rental units; and Rug Mill Seniors, a 98-unit section of the building offering affordable apartments for senior citizens.

"Nearly 40 years after the looms were packed up and hauled away, the rug mill is a working building once again," said DCA Commissioner Jane M. Kenny.

The building also features extensive commercial space on the ground floor. That space will contain the Freehold Borough Police Station, the Freehold Borough Municipal Court as well as a YMCA teen center.

The former A&M Karagheusian Rug Mill operated approximately 60 years before closing in the early 1960s. Among its many workers was the father of famed Freehold native Springsteen. The mill's closing was immortalized in "My Hometown."



New Life Photos of the former rug mill in Freehold, which has been converted into affordable housing.



DCA contributed approximately \$4.5 million in low interest loans from its Balanced Housing Program, which provides funding to developers who build affordable housing. HMFA provided a mortgage of approximately \$3 million, and an award of \$1.9 million in federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

Internal Services Corner

Building Improvements

Over the past months, DCA has seen a number of building improvements. The Department of Treasury arranged and paid for the carpeting in the main hallways on each floor and the conference rooms on the first floor, and the sensor toilets in the bathrooms.

The Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency donated the award display case located in the lobby and the new furniture in rooms 816, 129 and the Commissioner's Office.

DCA appreciates the continuous support of these agencies in improving our work environment.

Mural, Mural On the Wall

The Trenton Arts Connection, with a grant from DCA, has commissioned the painting of several murals, one to be done on the wall of the Something Special restaurant. The murals will be community oriented with the DCA motto, "Helping People and Communities Help Themselves."

The Something Special project will start on June 7 and commence approximately the third week of July. During the project period, the back door of our DCA building will be temporarily closed, and should only be used as an emergency exit.

Community Building News

Question Draws Many Responses

There were 33 responses to the popular Community Building question of what types of incentives or privileges a supervisor can use to motivate or reward employees. The comments ranged from a simple "thank you" to more creative ideas, such as awarding points for time off for education or training, sick time usage and work performance.

Other comments included praise rather than criticize, treating employees to donuts or bagels, gift certificates, communicating with staff, employee and supervisor/manager training, having fun with employees, treating workers with respect.

The comments were presented to the Community Building Roundtable members and discussed at the May 24 meeting. The members were impressed with the responses, which will be reviewed to determine those that would be feasible methods of recognizing employees.

Applause

Gloria Frederick, long-time employee of DCA, recently completed all requirements for a Ph.D. in Public Administration. She was graduated from Rutgers University-Newark last month.

Her dissertation is entitled, "Organizing Around Faith: The Roots and Organizational Dimensions of African-American Faith-Based Community Development Corporations."

Gloria is currently writing a book and journal articles about her research findings.

25 Years of Service

Desiree Hardwick was honored for 25 years of service at DCA's recent awards ceremony. Her name was inadvertently left out of last month's list of award winners.

Kudos

Kudos to former DCA Security Guard **Dotty Fletcher** for taking it upon herself to purchase and plant the flowers in the planters in front of the building.

The Communications and Policy Office is aware of letters commending the following employees:

Ivea McRae
Frances Arecco
Andrea DeJesus
Thomas Nugent



Housing Scholars...continued

allowing scholars to learn innovative urban planning and community development concepts. We're doing it again, this time with Rutgers-Camden in Camden's waterfront south neighborhood.

It is a testament to the Housing Scholars Program that many of the students have formed lasting relationships with their non-profits.

In 1999, we announced a new dimension to the program that helped to promote these long-term relationships – the Housing Scholars Graduate Program. We had found there was often a void when Housing Scholars left their assigned organization at the end of the summer. The graduate program, which extended the service of two housing scholars beyond the internship, has helped to fill that void.

It has allowed these graduate students to make an even greater impact on the needs of a neighborhood. And it has not only spared the agencies the headache of recruiting and training new employees to take the place of the interns. It has created a pipeline of graduate students eager to pursue careers in community service.

DCA is pleased to announce the expansion of the Housing Scholars Graduate Program.

This year, DCA is prepared to fund up to three positions for two years. Non-profit organizations will provide matching funds and develop a program that will groom a Graduate Housing Scholar for a leadership position in the organization.

The expansion of the graduate program is an example of DCA's continued support of the state's non-profit community. We appreciate the work that non-profits do every day to make a difference in their neighborhoods.

Speaking Up...continued

recommend to the court what course of action would best serve a child's interests. CASA volunteers interact with the court, the Division of Youth and Family Services, parents and children, therapists, attorneys, teachers and others.

One of CASA's most important contributions is the individualized attention provided to each child. CASA volunteers become a much-needed source of ongoing support for the child living in an out-of-home placement.

According to John, CASA volunteers come from all walks of life and all kinds of educational, ethnic and social backgrounds. No special prior experience is required. The volunteers are mature, responsible adults who care, who want to help in a practical way, and who are willing to devote up to 15 hours a month to hard, but gratifying work.

If you are interested in becoming a CASA volunteer in Mercer County, the first step is to call (609) 896-1912, ext. 4927 for information. Information about the organization is also available on the Internet at www.nationalcasa.org. Once invited to become a trainee, a volunteer receives a 30-hour training program on courtroom procedure, social service agencies, the Family Court system, and the special needs of children who have been abused or neglected. The next CASA training program is scheduled for September.

The non-profit organization also accepts financial contributions.

Summer Internship...continued

CHPRD is able to maintain the Hispanic Interns in Community Service Program, headed by Director **Angie Armand**, through financial support from its sponsors. Six Flags Great Adventure and Excellent Education for Everyone are two new sponsors this summer. A partnership between CHPRD and PSE&G has resulted in a new scholarship component that has been awarded to PSE&G's summer intern. CHPRD hopes that both recurring and new sponsors will also participate in providing scholarships for its summer interns.

Now that you know who we are, when you see any one of us feel free to provide insight on your job responsibilities for we are here to learn from you.